

Message Text

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INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CSAF WASHDC

JCS WASHDC

ISA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 2683

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL

SUBJECT: PROVOCATIVE INCIDENT IN FAEROES

SUMMARY: THIS CABLE REPORTS A RECENT INCIDENT IN THE FAEROE ISLANDS WHERE A DANISH AIR FORCE MAJOR'S STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS CREATED A POTENTIAL CONTRVOERSY IN DANISH-FAEOROES RELATIONS. THE INCIDENT NOW SEEMS TO BE CLOSED.
END SUMMARY

1) RECENT PRESS COVERAGE BEGINNING WITH A LAND OG FOLK, (COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER) ARTICLE ON 5 AUGUST RELATES THE FACTS OF SEVERAL ILL-ADVISED STATEMENTS MADE BY A DANISH AIR FORCE MAJOR TO A FAEROESE MAGAZINE. MAJOR B. J. JENSEN, DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE DANISH AIR FORCE RADAR STATION NEAR THORSHAVN, SPECULATED THAT IF THE ICELANDERS THREW THE AMERICANS OUT OF KEFLAVIK, THE FAEROESE GOVERNMENT WOULD IMMEDIATELY ACCEPT THEM IN THE FAEROES IF THE BASING AGREEMENT WERE SWEETENED BY THE AMERICAN DONATION OF A NEW AIRPORT IN THORSHAVN. RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS ABOUT WEAPON STORAGE AT THE RADAR STATION, JENSEN DISPLAYED SMALL ARMS AND STATED THAT TYY WERE FOR DEFENSE
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AGAINST THE "FIFTH COLUMN" OF THE FAEROESE POPULATION AND ALLUEDED TO CLOSE MILITARY AND CIVIL POLICY COOPERATION IN

KEEPING TRACK OF THESE UNNAMED CITIZENS.

2) MAJOR JENSEN'S STATEMENTS WERE SUFFICIENTLY CONTROVERSIAL TO CAUSE AN OFFICIAL INQUIRY FROM THE FAEROESE GOVERNMENT TO THE DANISH GOVERNMENT AS TO THE TRUTH OF HIS ALLEGATIONS. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE INQUIRY POINTEDLY REFERRED TO THE LAGTING (FAEROESE PARLIAMENT) OFFICIAL PROTESTS MADE IN 1960 AND 1970 OVER THE STATIONING OF TROOPS OR WEAPONS IN THE FAEROES. SUBSEQUENT PRESS COVERAGE INDICATED THAT PRIME MINISTER ANKER JORGENSEN REPLIED BY LETTER TO THE FAEROESE GOVERNMENT, DISAVOWING JENSEN'S STATEMENTS AND EMPHASIZING THAT THE MAJOR'S EVALUATION OF VARIOUS FAEROESE CONDITIONS IN NO MANNER REPRESENTS THE POSITION OF ANY DANISH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL. FURTHER, THE NOTION OF THE MILITARY AND CIVIL POLICE KEEPING TRACK OF THE FAEROESE "FIFTH COLUMN" IS INCONCEIVABLE.

3) COMMENT: SOURCES AT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HAVE CONFIRMED THE ACCURACY OF THE PRESS COVERAGE, WHICH HAS BEEN MATTER OF FACT, AND GENERALLY TREATS THE INCIDENT AS A GROSS ERROR OF JUDGEMENT ON THE PART OF JENSEN. HIS INJUDICIOUS COMMENTS HAVE CREATED ADVERSE PUBLICITY THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND MINISTRY COULD WELL DO WITHOUT. DENMARK ASSERTS SOVEREIGNTY IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS OVER THE FAEROES, AND AS SUCH HAS NOT REPLIED TO PREVIOUS LAGTING PROTESTS OVER TROOPS OR THE NATO BASE. THE BASING ISSUE HAS BEEN CONTENTIOUS IN DANISH-FAEROESE RELATIONSHIPS FOR YEARS. ANY SUGGESTION OF MOVING THE KEFLAVIK BASE TO THE FAEROES OR OF EXPANDING THE PRESENT BASE WOULD BE HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL AND HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT UPON DANISH-FAEROESE RELATIONSHIPS. IN ACTING PROMPTLY TO DISAVOW MAJOR JENSEN'S STATEMENTS, PRIME MINISTER ANKER JORGENSEN HAS MOST LIKELY AVERTED A POTENTIAL POLITICAL CONTROVERSY.

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TAGS: MPOL, PFOR, DA, FO, US, (JENSEN, B J)
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